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Housekeepers' Chat

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Friday, July 19, 1929

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NOT FOR PUBLICATION

U. S. Department of Agriculture

Subject: "How the Food and Drugs Act Protects Our Canned Foods." Information from Food, Drug and Insecticide Administration. Menu and recipe from Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. D. A.

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Do you remember, some twenty years ago, when all commercial canned goods was looked upon with suspicion? All too often the housewife who bought canned food found underfilled cans or otherwise objectionable products. Canned goods, it was said, could never be made by manufacturers, as well as by the housewife.

But what a lot has happened, in twenty years. Today, the American housewife can buy the best quality canned goods and preserves -- in many cases at prices lower than she can afford to buy and put them up herself. Luscious ripe fruits, appetizing vegetables, wholesome soups, pure condiments, tasty fish and shellfish are now available anywhere, any time. In fact, the can-opener is one of the most useful of kitchen devices.

The American housewife today has confidence in the canned foods that she buys. The Federal Food and Drugs Act is responsible for this confidence. For twenty-two years, the Department of Agriculture has been enforcing the Food and Drugs Act. When it was made effective, in 1907, there were violations, of every description, in the canned food industry. Honest manufacturers could not compete with those who gave short measure in cans, packed unfit material or used preservatives to cover up faulty and careless canning processes. As a result, the entire canning industry suffered from loss of confidence of consumers. Cooperation between the enforcers of the Food and Drugs Act and the American canners is responsible for the high quality of American canned goods today.

The Food and Drugs Act limited the amount of water allowed in canned foods. A generation ago an excessive amount of water, which is the cheapest and most prevalent of all adulterants, was by no means an uncommon ingredient. By paying for this water, the housewife suffered a material cheat in the purchase of each can. This "water tax" could well run into millions of dollars a year, if all manufacturers were to practice "slack filling", as this excess watering of canned goods is called. Fortunately for the housewife, this form of adulteration has been made impossible through the operation of the law.

Food and drug officials maintain a very rigid inspection service. For instance, take foreign canned products. Importations of canned peas, Brussels sprouts, string beans, cauliflower, mushrooms, and other non-acid packs, are not always free from dangerous bacteria. In compliance with the Food and Drugs Act, all suspected goods are sampled and examined, and condemned if necessary.

Domestic inspection of canned goods goes on, year in and year out, from Maine to Florida and from California to Washington. Wherever food is canned for the American housewife, there are the food and drug inspectors, watching, advising, and re-

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porting to the district offices of New York, Chicago, and San Francisco, and to headquarters at Washington, D. C.

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And now that we're back to Washington, D. C., we'll go straight from the headquarters of the Food and Drug Inspectors to the Bureau of Home Economics. For here we'll find one of the menus which has been planned especially for Aunt Sammy's radio audience.

Here's the menu: Baked Tomatoes and Ham; Corn on the Cob; Sliced Cucumbers; and Watermelon.

Here's the recipe for Baked Tomatoes and Ham. Six ingredients:

4 firm ripe tomatoes	Salt
Slice of ham, 1/2 inch thick	Buttered bread crumbs, and
Pepper	1 tablespoon sugar

Six ingredients -- again (Repeat)

Cover the slice of ham with water and bring to the boiling point. Pour off the water, cook the ham until well browned on both sides, and place in a baking dish. Cover the ham with slices of tomatoes, season with salt and pepper, sprinkle buttered bread crumbs over the tomatoes, cover, and cook for 3/4 to 1 hour in a moderate oven. When the ham is tender, remove the top of the baking dish and allow the bread crumbs to brown. Garnish with chopped parsley and serve from the dish.

To repeat the menu: Baked Tomatoes and Ham; Corn on the Cob; Sliced Cucumbers; and Watermelon.

Monday: "When We Go Picnicking."

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